

I feel that this is a very desirable state of affairs and that we should support this amendment.

THE PRESIDENT: Delegate Maurer.

DELEGATE MAURER: I rise to oppose the amendment. When I spoke against having "local board" in the constitution, it was with the knowledge and understanding that the General Assembly could pass laws which varied from county to county, notwithstanding what Delegate Freedlander has said. I believe the issue before us is whether the General Assembly retains entirely within its purview, varying the laws if necessary to meet diverse conditions in the State, or whether to meet these diverse conditions the General Assembly adheres to the principle of uniform laws and fragments education. But this is the point. When you give it out to local government, you give it to local commissioners, local charters or local councils, not necessarily to local boards.

The governance of education is different than any other function of government in this State. You operate, except in Baltimore City, through local school boards, a state school board, and both of these powers stemming from the General Assembly.

Baltimore City is different. It goes way back at least to 1872. The powers of the State with respect to education have been given to the mayor and council in Baltimore. Under the constitution which we are considering, Baltimore will be enabled to continue to have its longstanding practice, and there is a real question whether we have had a statewide school system in the past. We have had a system of schools in the counties and another system in Baltimore City. Baltimore City will be able to continue its practice. It is in the counties where you will have this change, where you will have either uniform laws or new powers given out to local governments, not necessarily to local school boards.

I believe that this is the wrong time to begin to take away from the General Assembly to a greater degree than has existed before its overview of education. Conditions in this nation and education are changing very rapidly. You have the intervention of the federal government. We are trying to build a nationwide policy but not a federal policy, and I think it is important that we have in this State House and in other states houses across the nation a good overview of education so that we have fifty strong states dealing with the

federal government and not just 20,000 school districts dealing with the federal government.

I urge you to oppose the amendment which is before you.

THE PRESIDENT: Delegate Borom.

DELEGATE BOROM: Mr. President and fellow delegates, the Local Government Committee commentary, if you would take the time to read it, indicates that the Committee very carefully for days and weeks studied this particular issue. We looked at all the different angles and, notwithstanding any statements our Chairman will make, keep in mind we are a committee of nineteen and we made certain decisions. We already brought to your attention that on the first reading in this particular section we made no reference to education as a local legislation matter.

Delegate Maurer has referred to the fact in Article 77 of the Code that the General Assembly may permit counties to vary terms of office. We have discussed and strongly suggested that no county in this State may lose what it presently has unless it is for the benefit of the state educational system in general.

As we talked about education coming under the rubric of public general law that the State could pass a public general law and to permit variances by county but not spelling it out, that each county would have the option of selecting or electing its school board as it sees fit.

I would agree with Delegate Maurer that the General Assembly should be concerned increasingly about education, but it should be on a statewide basis. The State Department of Education more and more in recent months has begun to be aware of the fact that as a statewide agency it has the responsibility to guarantee and insure the quality of education on a statewide basis and not leave it to counties to make the decision as to how their school system shall be run and to what quality and to what detriment of the pupils of this county. For that reason I would assure you that the majority is on board and feels no school system in the State of Maryland is going to be harmed and that as nearly as possible any prevailing condition which happens to be dear to the hearts of those residents of that county should remain.

I think it is unfortunate on the limited basis of the colloquy on this floor certain decisions have been made that the direction